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New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 35 *(continued)*

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/51/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/51/678)

Draft resolutions (A/51/L.33, A/51/L.34, A/51/L.35, A/51/L.36)

The President: I call on the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka of Senegal, to introduce draft resolutions A/51/L.33 to A/51/L.36.

Mr. Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to introduce the four draft resolutions — A/51/L.33, A/51/L.34, A/51/L.35 and A/51/L.36 — on the question of Palestine. These draft resolutions have been drawn up in the light of developments in the peace process. At the outset, allow me to announce that Cuba, Guinea, Malaysia and Qatar have joined as sponsors of the four draft resolutions.

The first three draft resolutions — A/51/L.33, A/51/L.34 and A/51/L.35 — renew the mandates entrusted to the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and the Secretariat's Department of Public information to continue their endeavours and programmes in their respective spheres of competence while taking current developments into consideration. The corresponding financial provision has been made in the programme budget for 1996-1997.

In draft resolution A/51/L.33, the General Assembly welcomes the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995. The Assembly reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy.

As can be seen in the text, the General Assembly considers that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the peace process and the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period.

The Assembly endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in its report and requests the

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Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council, as appropriate. It also authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments. The Committee is also to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people.

The General Assembly also requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work. It requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal.

In draft resolution A/51/L.34 on the work of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the General Assembly considers that the Division continues to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its various informational activities, including the further development of the electronic Information System on the Question of Palestine. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources in order to discharge the tasks that have been entrusted to it.

In draft resolution A/51/L.35 on the work of the Department of Public Information, the General Assembly notes that several defined provisions of the special information programme on the question of Palestine are yet to be implemented, and stresses the importance of implementation of all provisions of the programme. The General Assembly considers that the special information programme is very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East in general. It requests the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue the programme with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

Draft resolution A/51/L.36 is entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". In this draft resolution, the General Assembly reaffirms the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects. It expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements. It expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It stresses the necessity for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement. Finally, the draft resolution calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the success of the peace process.

The General Assembly stresses the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, and the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. It also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. It urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical transition period. It emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. It requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the Middle East region.

The four draft resolutions that I have just introduced were formulated to contribute to the peace process and to promote every concrete effort aimed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

Convinced that it is now necessary not only to maintain, but also to strengthen our solidarity with the Palestinian people, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I invite all delegations present to reaffirm their support for that objective and to adopt a constructive approach by voting in favour of the draft resolutions before the General Assembly.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/51/L.33 through A/51/L.36.

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind them that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tanç (Turkey): Although Turkey supports draft resolution A/51/L.36, we believe that it does not reflect all the obstacles on the road to lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. We believe that one of the fundamental threats to the peace process is terrorism. We would therefore like to emphasize the urgent need for countries that lend their support to terrorism immediately to stop that illegal and destructive practice and refrain from using terrorism as a foreign policy instrument.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation believes that it is vital to support and encourage the full resumption of the peace process, which will lead to the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to contribute as effectively as possible to strengthening the mechanisms of current bilateral and multilateral negotiations. In that regard, we express our support of the parties involved in reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict. That solution will include full recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Ecuador will vote in favour of the draft resolutions on agenda item 35, "Question of Palestine", in particular draft resolution A/51/L.36, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". Our positive vote, based on the reasons I have just expressed, reflects Ecuador's unwavering position of rejection and repudiation of the occupation or annexation of territory by force, as well as its firm conviction that a peaceful and negotiated settlement of territorial disputes between States must be reached without the threat of force, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

Ms. Arnon (Israel): Since September 1993, Israel and the Arabs have taken historic steps forward in the peace process. Major developments have included the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the PLO on 13 September 1993 and its subsequent agreements: the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed at Cairo on 4 May 1994; the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities, signed on 29 August 1994; the Interim Agreement signed in Washington on 28 September 1995; and the redeployment of Israel Defence Force troops from all major cities in the territories. On 14 September 1993, Israel and Jordan signed the Common Agenda, which led to the subsequent Washington Declaration, signed on 25 July 1994 and culminated in the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian Treaty of Peace on 26 October 1994. In addition, bilateral and multilateral negotiations continue and we look forward to progress on all tracks, including the continuing talks with the Palestinians on permanent status.

Draft resolution A/51/L.33 endorses and authorizes the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people. Draft resolution A/51/L.34 does the same with the regard to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat. Israel has opposed the existence of these bodies since their inception. They have obstructed dialogue and understanding through a one-sided and distorted portrayal of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, they stand in contradiction to the very principles upon which the peace process is based. In addition, these bodies expend valuable resources that should be devoted to more constructive activities, such as supporting social and economic development that would benefit Palestinians.

Draft resolution A/51/L.35 requests the Department of Public Information, among other things, to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine. We believe that this, too, would be a needless expenditure of valuable resources that could be put to better use.

Draft resolution A/51/L.36 attempts to predetermine the outcome of negotiations on issues relating to permanent status, in contradiction of the Declaration of Principles. Like draft resolution A/51/L.35, this draft resolution is fraught with internal contradictions. On the one hand, it claims to support the peace process that began in Madrid; on the other, it attempts to undermine the fundamental principle of direct negotiations without preconditions, upon which the Madrid process is based. We believe that Member States that claim to support the peace process have a responsibility to oppose this draft resolution, as it strikes at the essential principles on which the process is based. Accordingly, Israel will vote against the draft resolutions under this agenda item. We encourage others who support the peace process to do the same.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/51/L.33, A/51/L.34, A/51/L.35 and A/51/L.36.

We turn first to draft resolution A/51/L.33, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/51/L.33 was adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 46 abstentions (resolution 51/23).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Chad, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique and Sierra Leone informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegations of Costa Rica and Côte d'Ivoire had intended to abstain.]

The President: We turn now to draft resolution A/51/L.34, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad

and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/51/L.34 was adopted by 107 votes to 2, with 46 abstentions (resolution 51/24).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique and Sierra Leone informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn now to draft resolution A/51/L.35, entitled "Department of Public Information of the Secretariat".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution A/51/L.35 was adopted by 157 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 51/25).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Chad and Mozambique informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn now to draft resolution A/51/L.36, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Costa Rica, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution A/51/L.36 was adopted by 152 votes to 2, with 4 abstentions (resolution 51/26).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Chad and Mozambique informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before calling on the first speaker in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Robinson (United States of America): My Government opposes the four resolutions that have been introduced under agenda item 35, entitled "Question of Palestine". These resolutions are remnants of an earlier time, which has been overtaken by events on the ground in the Middle East. Three of these draft resolutions, contained in documents A/51/L.33, A/51/L.34 and A/51/L.35 and their addenda, promote institutions whose activities and approach to Middle East peace are unbalanced and outdated. They do nothing to support the process of direct negotiation now under way between the parties concerned, and they scarcely take note of the considerable achievements of the negotiating partners to date.

What these resolutions do instead is drain away $7 million each year in precious financial and human resources that could better serve the cause of economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The international community has clearly stated its support for assisting the Palestinians in building needed self-government institutions, economic infrastructures and social services. We believe the General Assembly should consider carefully whether the activities supported by these resources represent the most effective use of United Nations resources in support of these objectives.

Seven million dollars is a great deal of money in the West Bank and Gaza. According to the Palestinian Public Investment Programme and Funding Needs for 1997, $7 million could fund two agricultural training centres, one each in the West Bank and Gaza. It could construct a new cardiac centre in Nablus, or a community hospital in Rafah. Seven million dollars could build a new system of local roads in the northern Gaza Strip, or underwrite a project to rehabilitate shelters in refugee camps. All of these projects are currently unfunded by the donor community.

The $7 million that now funds the activities of obscure United Nations committees and departments that purport to be dedicated to the welfare of Palestinians could make a real difference in the lives of ordinary people. The question is simply this: Do we want actually to help Palestinians, or would we prefer merely to talk about helping Palestinians? In a reform-minded era in

which every dollar counts, there can be only one answer. We urge that funds go instead to the activities of other United Nations organizations, such as the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Development Programme, that will carry out programmes directly benefiting the Palestinian people.

The draft resolution contained in documents A/51/L.36 and Add.1, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", injects the General Assembly into issues that are under direct negotiation between the parties. This, in our view, is inappropriate and unhelpful. Let us leave to the parties the settlement of their differences in the context of a negotiating process to which they have given their agreement; what they need from the General Assembly is our support and encouragement, not second-guessing and side-taking. At this important moment, we want to support that process of negotiation rather than focus on issues or statements that divide and polarize.

The United States strongly supports the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. To our regret, the unbalanced drafts before us complicate the achievement of that objective. We, therefore, voted against these four resolutions.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted for the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.36, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". However, our vote in favour of the draft resolution does not mean that we support or reject the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements or the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and referred to in the ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs and operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

As for the eighth preambular paragraph of the resolution, we would like to reiterate that the full withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Arab territories, the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace, and implementation of the principles and the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, is the correct path for guaranteeing that all States in the region will be able to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 35.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/51/543, A/51/678-S/1996/953)

Draft resolutions (A/51/L.38, A/51/L.39 and A/51/L.40)

The President: I now call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/51/L.38 and A/51/L.39.

Mr. Rahman Salah (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Egyptian delegation has the honour this year of submitting to the General Assembly draft resolution A/51/L.38 on Jerusalem.

This draft resolution normally enjoys the support of the members of the General Assembly, as it recalls the responsibility of the international community towards the city of Jerusalem and reiterates the need for the implementation of all Security Council resolutions pertaining to the inalienable and legitimate rights of the city of Jerusalem.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution recalls the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Holy City of Jerusalem and declares null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel in Jerusalem, in particular the so-called "Basic Law".

Furthermore, the operative section states that the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem is null and void.

In the second and third paragraphs, the draft requests that States refrain from transferring their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980). In its final paragraph, the draft requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present draft resolution.

This draft resolution is particularly important because we are witnessing a real crisis in the peace process. Those who desire peace need the full support of the General Assembly.

The Egyptian delegation also takes pleasure in submitting to the General Assembly this year draft resolution A/51/L.39 on the Syrian Golan. The draft resolution, in its preamble, reaffirms the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force, as well as the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied Syrian Golan. It also notes the convening at Madrid of the Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

In operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, the General Assembly declares that Israel has failed so far to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

The authors of the draft resolution hope that they will continue to obtain support from the international community based on the principles underlying the peace process begun at Madrid.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/51/L.38, A/51/L.39 and A/51/L.40.

I shall now call on those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to explain Lebanon's vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/51/L.40, entitled "Middle East peace process".

First, despite the fact that the sponsors of the draft resolution have admitted that no progress has been made in this process since the item was discussed last year, expressing no satisfaction in that regard, they have ignored the general conclusion reached by all parties concerned that the peace process is threatened as a result of Israeli intransigence.

Secondly, we regret that the sponsors of the draft resolution did not take into consideration proposals aimed simply at recalling the need to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978). I should like to recall that Lebanon, which participated in the Madrid Peace Conference and in the subsequent bilateral negotiations in Washington, calls for the implementation in full of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in order to put an end to the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Lebanon reaffirms its sincere desire for the realization of a just and comprehensive peace in the area. Israel must implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which it has refused to do for the last 18 years, and in particular since the peace process began five years ago.

The continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the daily acts of aggression perpetrated by the Israeli forces against Lebanese civilians, the declarations of Israeli officials rejecting the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the violent situation in southern Lebanon all confirm the need to implement this resolution, which can guarantee an end to the violence. The repeated attacks by the Israeli army in the area north of the so-called security zone established by Israel clearly show the failure of the concept of and the logic behind this zone. We firmly believe that the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is the only guarantee of peace and security in southern Lebanon.

That Security Council resolution is clear. Since 1978, the Security Council has repeatedly renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Peace in the Middle East will never prevail so long as Israel occupies southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan. Israel must withdraw from southern Lebanon, in compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and from the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), if we are to realize a full, just and comprehensive peace in the area.

My delegation would like to reiterate Lebanon's firm belief in the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of land for peace. We believe that it is very important to resume negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point at which they stopped, and that a full, just and comprehensive peace requires Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, to the line of 4 June 1967, and from southern Lebanon to beyond its internationally recognized borders, in accordance with resolution 425 (1978).

Lebanon, which reiterates its commitment to the peace process, would draw attention to the fact that

Security Council resolution 425 (1978) does not call for any synchronization between its provisions and the peace process. Lebanon joined in that process with the complete and sincere desire to realize peace in the Middle East. However, we have always stressed that Israel must implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) without tying it to progress in the peace process that began with the Madrid Conference and as set forth in the letter of assurances between the two sponsoring Powers and Lebanon, which noted that implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is not linked to or conditioned on progress in the peace process.

Thirdly, we would like to repeat our objection to the synchronization of the bilateral and multilateral negotiations, since the latter will not bear fruit so long as Israel remains in the occupied territories and has not withdrawn. We see no advantage to attempting to force normalization while the Israeli occupation of the territories continues. Such attempts will be neither useful nor fruitful so long as the bilateral tracks have not achieved the desired results, in keeping with international law and the Madrid principles. Any attempt to impose normalization prior to a commitment to the principle of land for peace will be doomed to failure.

Lebanon, a principal participant in the peace process in the Middle East, will vote against the draft resolution that has been submitted. The international community will fully understand the significance and importance of our vote, which clearly and unequivocally demonstrates that our attitude in the bilateral peace process is firm and unshakable. We call once again for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) so that we can meet this challenge.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate Lebanon's total commitment to the peace process, desiring as we do a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the region.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Once again, I should like to state that the delegation of Ecuador feels it essential to support and encourage full implementation of the peace process in the Middle East, in keeping with the Madrid Peace Conference on 1991 and to make an effective contribution to strengthening the bilateral and multilateral negotiating mechanisms now under way. In this connection, we also support the parties involved in attempting to find a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East. Ecuador will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 33, "The situation in the Middle East".

I should like to stress that a vote in favour of draft resolution A/51/L.39, "The Syrian Golan", reflects Ecuador's unswerving decision to reject and refuse to recognize the annexation of territories acquired by force as well as its firm conviction that a peaceful and negotiated settlement must be found without the threat of force — I repeat, without the threat of force — to the territorial problems that exist among States, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

Mr. Tanç (Turkey): My explanation of vote concerns draft resolution A/51/L.39. Although Turkey will support the draft resolution, I would like to clarify the position of my delegation on one aspect of the situation in the Middle East.

There are several reasons that have caused the current impasse in the peace process. It is not fair to assign all responsibility to one of those variables or to one of the countries involved. All the factors contributing to the existing stand-off have to be dealt with effectively.

We would like to underline once again our strong belief that one of the most important obstacles to the peace process is terrorism. There is an urgent need for the countries of the region that give their support and encouragement to terrorism to stop immediately the use of that destructive and unscrupulous practice as a means of advancing their foreign policy interests.

The President: I have received requests to speak from the representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation. Earlier, the assumption was that the requests related to statements in explanation of vote before the voting. However, it has now been explained that the requests by Syria and the Russian Federation have to do with an effort to submit an amendment to a draft resolution.

I would advise both delegations that we are already in the process of taking action on the draft resolution concerned. It would be unusual at this juncture to think in terms of offering an amendment.

I call on the representative of Swaziland, who has asked to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I was getting confused when suddenly the President stopped convening and presiding over the Assembly.

However, in support of the President's comments, my delegation objects with regard to amending draft resolutions on which action is already being taken. When we come to take action on draft resolutions, we do so after we have consulted with our Governments.

If an amendment comes at the eleventh hour, are you sure beyond a shadow of a doubt, Mr. President, that when we vote we shall be taking positions in full consultation with our capitals? We are representing Member States here. Our Governments have a right to know what we are doing, and immediately after this meeting I shall report to Swaziland on the action I have taken. With regard to those delegations that intervene at the eleventh hour, I would urge you, Sir, to use your veto power, if you have such a power, to veto the amendment so that we can continue to take action.

The President: This is the General Assembly, not the Security Council. We have no veto power here. I am sure that the Assembly has taken the point of view of the delegation of Swaziland into account.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank you most earnestly, Mr. President, for clearing up the confusion caused by the Secretariat. My delegation requests that a slight amendment be made to draft resolution A/51/L.39, before the voting and explanations of vote. The Secretariat misunderstood, because my delegation was already on the list to explain its vote before the vote, which is how the mistake happened.

In reply to the Ambassador of Swaziland, whose explanation and whose position we welcome, we would like to thank him for his excellent statement. I would like to say, however, that this amendment would, I think, be welcomed by his Government and himself. If you will allow me now, I would like to submit this amendment to operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/51/L.39.

The paragraph begins: "Demands that Israel resume ...". We would like to delete those words and replace them with "Calls for the resumption of the talks ...". The rest of the draft resolution would remain the same.

My delegation would like to apologize to all delegations and thank them for their spirit of understanding. If you will allow me now to explain my vote, Mr. President, I shall do so, but if you deem it necessary, I can speak later.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I asked to speak, Mr. President, in order to explain my vote and not to submit an amendment. I am prepared to do this when you think it is possible. If appropriate, I am ready to speak now.

In connection with the oral amendment just proposed by the representative of Syria on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.39, namely the amendment to operative paragraph 5, which would now begin with the words "Calls for the resumption of the talks ...", I would like to point out that this is a constructive proposal by the sponsors, and we are grateful to them for the suggestion.

Furthermore, as a sponsor of the Middle East peace process, Russia believes that the issues mentioned in draft resolution A/51/L.39 on the implementation of the principle of land for peace will in fact come to the fore in the course of direct Arab-Israeli talks, which should be resumed immediately. Bearing in mind all these considerations, my delegation was able to support this draft resolution and shall vote in favour of it.

The President: I hope the matter is quite clear to all delegates here. I am not trying to play on words, but I am advised that what has been proposed is an oral revision, as distinct from an amendment, and if all the sponsors — Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen — can support the oral revision, we can proceed to take a vote on this draft resolution. Any objections? I see none. Is the representative of Swaziland satisfied?

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Yes, the sins are forgiven. I am comfortable now.

The President: I am glad that we are no longer sinners. We shall now proceed. Syria still has a request to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation will vote against draft resolution A/51/L.40, entitled "Middle East

peace process", for the following reasons. We have tried to convince the sponsors of the draft resolution of the need for the text to reflect the status quo in the peace process, the obstacles raised by the Israeli Government at the moment, as well as its non-compliance with the principles underlined at the Madrid Conference and other commitments and principles agreed by all parties aimed at providing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region. Thus the international community represented in the General Assembly should adopt a resolution reflecting the deterioration in the situation surrounding the peace process.

The international community should send an urgent message to the Israeli Government that its current positions are the cause of the freeze in the peace process.

We have drawn the attention of the sponsors to the fact that the adoption of a routine resolution does not at all reflect recent developments or the concerns of the international community on the pause in the peace process. This is not going to break the current deadlock in the Syrian track of the peace process. It is extremely important that this draft resolution urge Israel to resume negotiations for peace on Lebanese and Syrian tracks because a just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without them.

Secondly, the draft resolution before us refers only to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), but not to resolution 425 (1978), despite our efforts to have it included. All of these resolutions are the basis and frame of reference for the establishment of the peace process. Finally, Syria cannot welcome a peace process that is not based on the principles of international legality and of land for peace.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

We have also heard the oral revision made with the consent of the sponsors. I will read out the oral revision to operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/51/L.39:

> "Calls for the resumption of the talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks and respects the commitments and guarantees reached during the previous talks."

The Assembly will now take decisions on draft resolutions A/51/L.38, A/51/L.39 and A/51/L.40.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/51/L.40: Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

We shall now turn to draft resolution A/51/L.38 entitled "Jerusalem".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav

Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
Israel

Abstaining:
Bahamas, Barbados, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nicaragua, Nigeria, Samoa, Swaziland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/51/L.38 was adopted by 148 votes to 1, with 13 abstentions (resolution 51/27).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Mozambique informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Draft resolution A/51/L.39 is entitled "The Syrian Golan".

We shall now begin the voting process on draft resolution A/51/L.39, as orally revised.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:
Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:
Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:
Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela

Draft resolution A/51/L.39, as orally revised, was adopted by 84 votes to 2, with 71 abstentions (resolution 51/28).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Mozambique informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Draft resolution A/51/L.40 is entitled "Middle East peace process".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:
Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon,

Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan

Draft resolution A/51/L.40 was adopted by 159 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions (resolution 51/29).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Mozambique and Seychelles informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote. May I remind them that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Baumanis (Latvia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Robinson (United States of America): My Government is pleased once again to have cast its vote in favour of the annual resolution on the Middle East peace process. This resolution is a clear endorsement of the efforts the parties have made, often against long odds, to keep moving forward in their mutual quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is an acknowledgement that their commitments deserve the generous support and encouragement of this Assembly, without bias and without reservation. It highlights the positive role the United Nations has to play in the Middle East peace process and makes a significant contribution to continuing the momentum which the process has developed in the five years since the Madrid Conference.

The same cannot be said of the other two resolutions included under this agenda item. We believe that the resolution entitled "The Syrian Golan", like others that deal with the long-standing Arab-Israeli dispute, serves only to complicate the achievement of a mutually acceptable outcome.

Syria and Israel have committed themselves to a negotiating process to resolve their differences and achieve a lasting peace agreement. The General Assembly can only make this goal more elusive by injecting itself into issues that the parties have agreed will be decided in face-to-face negotiations. As a sponsor of the peace process begun at Madrid, the United States is firmly committed to helping the parties compose their differences. However, we do not believe that resolutions such as these are conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust and reconciliation that will help this process succeed.

As has been our practice in the past, the United States abstained in the vote on the resolution concerning Jerusalem. Jerusalem must remain undivided and its future should be decided through permanent status negotiations, as agreed by the parties in their 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles. This Assembly should not inject itself into this most complex and emotional issue.

Ms. Rubinstein (Israel): My delegation welcomes the adoption of the resolution entitled "Middle East peace process", also known as the "positive resolution", which

expresses the support of the international community for the ongoing peace process in our region.

Israel wishes to take this opportunity to call once again on our neighbours to renew negotiations without preconditions. Only through direct talks will we be able to work out the issues which remain between us. Israel also calls upon the States of our region that have not participated in the multilateral talks to do so without further hesitation.

It had been our hope that this resolution would include, among its other elements, an explicit condemnation of terrorism in all its forms. Terrorism, as defined earlier this year at the Summit of the Peacemakers in Sharm el-Sheikh, is one of the main obstacles to achieving peace in our region. It is also my delegation's belief that the process of democratization can assist the progress towards peace, human rights and prosperity for the entire Middle East.

Regarding resolution 51/28, I would like to quote from the letter of invitation to the Madrid Peace Conference.

> "The United States and the Soviet Union are prepared to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, through direct negotiations ... based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and [illegible]8 (1973)."

No other resolutions are cited in the invitation. Attempts to link the invitation to other resolutions relating to the Middle East and the principle of land for peace are misleading and counter-productive to the achievement of peace.

With regard to resolutions 51/27 and 51/28, my delegation believes that the issues of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights should be addressed within the framework of direct negotiations between the parties themselves. The General Assembly is not the correct forum for the discussion of these issues. Any attempt by the United Nations to adopt such resolutions will only serve to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

Mr. Guyot (France) (*interpretation from French*): Like last year, while France voted in favour of the text entitled "Middle East peace process", it did not co-sponsor the draft resolution for reasons that are well known to the General Assembly. We feel in point of fact that the absence of any reference to Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is a regrettable lacuna. France attaches particular importance to respect for the principles set out in that resolution and would have preferred the United Nations on this occasion to reaffirm its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation has frequently expressed its firm belief in the possibility of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East in the interests of all States in the region. We also believe that peace in the Middle East is indivisible. That, too, is in the interests of all States of the region. Peace must include all tracks and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

From this rostrum, my delegation has often called on Israel to implement the agreements it has entered into. We have referred to the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference on which the peace process is based. We have also stressed the need to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). We would like once again to reassert that any efforts to promote a partial peace will not facilitate progress towards peace in the region.

Accordingly, my delegation believes that resolution 51/29, entitled "Middle East peace process", is deficient. It does not refer to Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories in southern Lebanon, nor does it mention the obstacles that continue to hinder the peace process. That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 51/29.

Mr. Abderahman (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am speaking on behalf of the Arab States that voted in favour of the resolution on the Middle East peace process.

The Arab Summit in Cairo last June made peace a strategic choice — a choice that it has fully supported. This was reflected in the statements of the Arab States that participated in the debate on this agenda item. Most of the Arab States voted in favour of the resolution as an expression in principle of its support of the peace process. However, we wish to place on record and stress the following points in which we found the resolution lacking. We did make relevant proposals on these points in the drafting of the resolution, but they were not taken into consideration.

First, regrettably, the resolution includes no reference to Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which represents the central pillar of the negotiations between Lebanon and Israel.

Secondly, we believe that the difficult circumstances and dangerous daily developments on the ground caused by the behaviour of the Israeli Government to co-opt and derail the peace process. This should have been clearly reflected in this year's resolution. We were duty-bound in this resolution to call firmly on the Israeli Government to implement in full all the agreements concluded between the two parties. Failure to implement those agreements will lead to a lack of confidence in and support for the peace process.

Thirdly, the resolution lacks any reference to the dangerous, negative and destructive impact of Israel's decision to resume building settlements in the occupied Arab territories. The countries on whose behalf I speak believe that this could completely undermine the whole peace process. Our countries hope that the adoption of the resolution this year and our votes in its favour will not be interpreted as an acceptance of the status quo.

We reaffirm that the current status of the peace process cannot continue. Negotiations are not an objective in and of themselves. Agreements are totally useless unless they are implemented and failure to do so could seriously jeopardize the future of the peace process in which we are all interested.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Before I qualify the position my delegation has taken, I have a statement that was circulated by the delegation of Israel. The last paragraph, if I may be allowed to reflect on it, reads as follows:

> "The General Assembly is not the correct forum for the discussion of these issues. Any attempt by the United Nations to adopt such resolutions will only serve to prejudge the outcome of the negotiations." *(supra, p. 83)*

My comment on behalf of my delegation on the lines I have read out is this: I humbly — I repeat, humbly — on behalf of my delegation implore the delegation of Israel to cooperate with the partners in the peace initiative with a view to finding a lasting settlement in the Middle East.

There is no Member State that can tell the General Assembly that it is not the right forum to discuss any matter relating to peace and security, no matter what club or what part of the world it belongs to. Therefore, I appeal that, as we try to support a peaceful settlement, we not feel threatened. We are speaking within our rights and we should do so as long as there is a United Nations which is serving the interests of all Member States.

I think I have sounded that warning.

My friends — and I call them my friends; they know why I am saying my friends — the Kingdom of Swaziland, if I may reveal this, has been with Israel through the toughest times of times. They know our spirit and letter in our partnership.

Coming to the explanation of our vote, I want to say that, in the voting on resolution 51/27, the Kingdom of Swaziland abstained; in the voting on resolution 51/28, the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland again abstained; in the voting on resolution 51/29, my delegation voted in favour. This is the qualification: It is our policy that, when your neighbours are facing a contentious situation, you bring them together. You serve as an office of goodwill. This is what we are attempting to do with all the parties in the Middle East: to find a lasting, peaceful resolution that lets them continue to open the doors, to come together, to discuss faithfully and to agree faithfully.

In doing so, my delegation urges that the letter and spirit of the conferences of 1993 and September 1995 and the Madrid Conference should continue to be respected with a view to finding a lasting solution in the Middle East. We therefore humbly suggest that the parties to the conflict should know that to do otherwise would not be in the interest of peace in the Middle East.

No one wins a war. In the process of war, children die and innocent persons suffer. In the interests of children and innocent persons in the Middle East, my delegation therefore urges that negotiations with a view to finding a lasting solution should continue and the efforts of those partners who are attempting at all costs to bring peace to the Middle East should be supported by the United Nations and the parties involved.

Mr. Escovar Salom (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As in previous years, Venezuela voted in favour of resolutions 51/27 and 51/29 on Jerusalem and the Middle East peace process, respectively, under the agenda item on the situation in the Middle East.

We would like to emphasize, however — in accordance with statements made by the Heads of State and Government of the Ibero-American Conference recently held in Chile — that it is our position that the problems of that region must be solved in accordance with the constructive spirit of the agreements concluded between the parties involved, while protecting the legitimate rights of all the inhabitants and guaranteeing access to holy places, in full respect of international law.

We feel — as stressed in operative paragraph 9 of resolution 51/29 — that an active role of the United Nations in the Middle East peace process can make a positive contribution, especially in the context of the numerous resolutions that the General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted on this issue since 1947, including the question of the special status of the City of Jerusalem.

Mr. Marsico (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As it did in 1995, the delegation of Argentina has abstained in the voting on resolution 51/28. The Argentine Republic was unable to endorse the resolution on the Syrian Golan because of the reference in operative paragraph 6 to "the line of 4 June 1967". In no way — I repeat, in no way — does our action change the Argentine Republic's consistent position of absolute and total rejection of the acquisition of territory by force.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call on the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We wish to place on record our great satisfaction at the positions clearly expressed today by the representatives of the international community. We would also like to express our thanks and deep appreciation to the Member States that supported the resolutions adopted today under the agenda items entitled "The situation in the Middle East" and "Question of Palestine".

I wish to stress the special importance we attach to the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly on Jerusalem, which is a core issue in the settlement of the Middle East question. I would like also to mention the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The fact that only one State voted against the resolution on Jerusalem and only two against the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine clearly expresses the international position, the nature of the change required in the parties' positions and the direction that change needs to take.

The voting today reiterates the international community's commitment to the conclusion of a just settlement of the Palestinian question and to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. These resolutions support the peace process and are anchored in the principle of the United Nations continuing responsibility for the question of Palestine until a settlement on that question is reached. They reaffirm the international community's commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including those of the Security Council. We believe that the international community has sent a clear and correct message and hope that all the parties concerned will understand the content of the message and work accordingly.

In conclusion, we would like to thank, in particular, the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their efforts and their continued support for our people and our just cause.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 33.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.